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## ODHH Monthly Bulletin

May  
2014

### Greetings from Executive Director:

Hello!

Wow, it's already May! This year is going fast and so much is happening.

It's very important to pay close attention to the upcoming election. Not only are we voting for the new governor and lieutenant governor, but also for senators, delegates and many other open political positions that need to be chosen. Your vote makes a huge difference! The deadline to register is June 3rd, so please read the bulletin and make the decision to register and vote!

Other important news is related to the changes happening with text to 911 options. The FCC, the Federal Communications Commission, has mandated that all states become able to receive text messages to 911 by the end of this year. The article explains more in depth about how Maryland deals with that.

It's not all business, but fun too! Everyman Theatre is hosting a play called *Tribes* that opens on May 27th. They have been working hard to make sure that interpreters, captioning and everything is included with accessibility. We hope to see you there.

And finally, every May the American Speech-Language Association hosts Better Hearing and Speech month. You can learn more about what that means from our article. We hope you are all enjoying Spring time. Take care and stay in touch.

~Lisa



### May is Healthy Vision Month!

Your eyes are your windows to the world. Learn how you can protect them.

### Are You At Risk?

Americans agree that eyesight has a huge impact on day-to-day living and is one of the senses they fear losing most. Unfortunately, people often do not pay attention to their eye health unless they notice a problem.

Many common eye diseases that can lead to vision loss and blindness, such as diabetic eye disease, glaucoma, or age-related macular degeneration (AMD), often have no early warning signs or symptoms. Having regular eye exams to make sure the eyes are

## This Month:

**Register to Vote**

**Text to 9-1-1**

**Tribes - Everyman Theatre**

**May is Better Hearing & Speech Month**

## Register to Vote

Do you know how important is it to vote? Voting gives you the right to choose someone you are confident will represent you and your community well.

Choosing your new governor and new legislators is how you can make sure you are being heard. By voting, you are representing the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind community in the governing process -- and being an advocate to communicate both strengths and needs.

This is why voting is important. Do not forget to register to vote! The deadline to register is June 3rd.

The primary election is on June 24th. If you cannot vote on that day, you can participate in early voting, which will be from June 12th to 19th. The general election will be on November 4th.

Candidates for Governor and Lt. Governor:

Democrats:

Anthony G Brown and Ken Ulman  
Doug Gansler and Jolene Ivey  
Ralph Jaffe and Freda Jaffe  
Heather Mizeur and Delman Coates  
Charles U. Smith and Clarence Tucker  
Cindy A. Walsh and Mary Elizabeth Wingate-Pennacchia

Republicans:

David R. Craig and Jeannie Haddaway  
Ron George and Shelley Aloï  
Larry Hogan and Boyd Rutherford  
Charles Lollar and Ken Timmerman

The ballot also includes Senators, Delegates, County Executives, et cetera. Make sure you research the candidates and choose representatives that you know will represent you and your community well.



healthy and seeing their best is important for everyone. However, the risk of vision loss and blindness is higher for some people based on race, ethnicity, and other demographic and socioeconomic factors. You might be at higher risk for eye disease if you have a family history of eye disease; have diabetes; are African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, or Alaska Native; or are older than 50. Some diseases affect certain populations disproportionately.

-**Glaucoma**, which affects your side or peripheral vision first, is three times more common in African Americans than in Whites. It is a leading cause of blindness in African Americans.

-**Diabetic retinopathy**, a leading cause of blindness caused by uncontrolled diabetes, occurs more often in Hispanics/Latinos than in Whites.

-American Indians and Alaska Natives are 35 percent more likely to have diabetes than the average adult in the United States, putting them at increased risk of diabetic eye disease.

-Older adults are at higher risk of developing age-related eye diseases and conditions such as AMD, glaucoma, or cataract. AMD is a leading cause of blindness in Whites.

[More About 'Are You At Risk?'](#)

[Healthy Vision Month](#)

There are a number of community forums where the candidates' debate important issues for the State of Maryland. The Disability community hosts a debate every year. In addition, this year, the Maryland Association of the Deaf is hoping to also set up a community forum. Attending these forums is a great way to get know the candidates and will help you make an educated decision. Keep an eye on your ODHH announcements - we will be sending out information on all of these forums.

As a reminder, you must have a Maryland state ID, driver's license, or social security number to be able to register to vote.

For more information, please go to: <http://www.elections.state.md.us/elections/2014/>

## Text to 9-1-1

Text-to- 911 means that when you have an emergency, you simply text 911 with information on your emergency and your location. You must state your physical address because, unlike with a voice call, call centers are not able to identify your location when you used a cellular device. You will also eventually have the ability to send photos with your text.



Last Thursday, May 15, marked the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)'s deadline for phone carriers to be able to provide text-to-911 service in areas where dispatchers are ready to receive the messages. Here in Maryland, the goal is that this feature will be available in all jurisdictions at the same time. Maryland hopes to have this system in place in the next four to six months.

Frederick County has been accepting 911 text messages from Verizon customers for the past year as part of a pilot program for the State. The FCC records show Text-to-911 is available on a limited basis in just 15 other states. The FCC has laid out a timeline that requires text-to-911 to be rolled out everywhere by the end of 2014.

The providers supporting the service include AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon Wireless.

## Tribes - Everyman Theatre

## ODHH on the Move

**Green Festival**  
**Saturday, May 31 &  
Sunday, June 1, 2014**  
**10:00am - 6:00pm**  
**Walter E. Washington  
Convention Center**  
**801 Mt. Vernon Pl, NW**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**20001**

**Transition 101- Life  
After High School**  
**June 2, 2014**  
**6:00 pm - 8:00 pm**  
**Maryland Relay Office**  
**301 West Preston**  
**Street, Suite 1008A**  
**Baltimore, MD 21201**

**Deaf & Hard of Hearing  
Awareness Day**  
**@ Kings Dominion**  
**Saturday, May 31st**  
**Kings Dominion**  
**16000 Theme Park**  
**Way**  
**Doswell, VA 23047**

**ASL Subway Night -  
Making Cards for  
Ronald McDonald  
House**  
**Friday May 23rd**  
**6:00pm - 9:00pm**  
**1101 N. Rolling Road**  
**Catonsville, MD**

**ASL Sign and Dine**  
**Saturday, May 24th**  
**11:00am - 1:00pm**  
**Ballston Mall**  
**4238 Wilson Blvd**  
**Arlington, VA**

## Quick Links

[ODHH Website](#)



We have exciting news that we want to share with you! Everyman Theatre is presenting a play called "Tribes," which is the hysterical and touching coming-of-age story about the struggle for self-identity and what it truly means to be understood. The play has traveled from England to America and has been presented in several states here in the United States. The play's main character, a deaf man named Billy, is played by deaf actor, John McGinty.



Everyman Theatre has established an accessibility committee to prepare for this play. It was impressive that the staff of Everyman Theatre included representatives of the deaf and hard of hearing community on their committee to ensure that the community's expertise was included in the decision making process.

Everyman Theatre is highly committed to making sure its theatre and the play is accessible to the deaf/hard of hearing patrons. Not only that there will be 5 interpreters on stage - they also will have closed captions. Each role in the play will have its own font and color so we will be able to follow who is talking.

Specific performances have been chosen to be interpreted and captioned. Please see the "deaf-friendly" flyer and pick a day to go! The higher the attendance from the community, the more likely they will be to include future plays with more deaf actors/actresses!

We want to sincerely thank Everyman Theatre for making sure we are able to enjoy the play as much as the rest of the audience.

We hope to see you there, as we will be there on Opening Night, which is May 30th.

For more information <http://everymantheatre.org/productions/Tribes>

## May is Better Hearing & Speech Month

Since 1927, the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) celebrates Better Hearing and Speech Month each May. This annual event provides opportunities for ASHA to raise awareness about its mission to assist people with disabilities overcome communication barriers. ASHA works to promote solutions that improve the ability of people with



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[Maryland.gov](http://Maryland.gov)

speech, cognitive or hearing disabilities communicate more effectively.

Even a very slight hearing loss can have an impact on your daily life. Speech and language disabilities can take many forms and can limit academic achievement, social adjustment, and career advancement. It is easier to recognize if you have one of these disabilities by knowing the signs and symptoms. Learn more about these symptoms. [#identifythesigns](#)

There is an Identify the Signs campaign that aims to educate the public about the warning signs of communication disabilities. Individuals are encouraged to visit this site to learn the signs and, if necessary, seek professional help. ASHA encourages people to share the site and its information with family, friends and social networks.

Have a happy and healthy speech and hearing month!

**If there is a topic you would like to see ODHH cover in our upcoming bulletins and vlogs, please email us and we will consider your request.**

**Questions? Comments? Contact:**

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